Summary Report

NELAC Breakout Sessions

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Purpose

Data was collected to obtain input from NELAC conference participants. This input has been summarized in this report for the Self Sufficiency Task Group to use in defining the structure of the future national laboratory accreditation program, referred to as the "Next Generation" for the purposes of this discussion.

Data Collection

Breakout Sessions

Attendees of the NELAC Conference were divided into three four breakout sessions with cross representation from four stakeholder groups: federal agencies, state agencies, laboratories (not associated with federal or state agencies) and other stakeholders. Each session was facilitated by members of the Self Sufficiency Task Group:

- Session 1 was facilitated by Silky Labie (FL DEP), with assistance from Pat Hurr (USEPA).
- Session 2 was facilitated by Alfredo Sotomayor (WI DNR), with assistance from Ann Marie Allen (MA DEP).
- Session 3 was facilitated by Aurora Shields (KS Dept of Health and Environment), with assistance from Barbara Finazzo (USEPA, Region 2).
- Session 4 was facilitated by Judy Duncan (OK DEQ), with assistance from Art Clark (USEPA).

Each group was asked to provide prioritized responses to each of four "what" questions developed by the Self Sufficiency Task Group. Each session was provided the following "rules" for the discussion:

- Everyone is encouraged to participate in the discussion session. Additionally, the questionnaire may be used to submit ideas.
- During the discussion session, focus on the four core "what" questions.
- Ideas may be discussed so they are well understood, but there are no "bad" ideas.
- Other issues may be discussed as time permits

Minutes

The minutes from each breakout session are attached to this report.

Survey Form

For those individuals who wished to do so, a written form was available and collected at the conclusion of the breakout sessions. These responses were reviewed for additional information for inclusion in this summary report. A copy of the survey form used for this purpose is attached to this report.

Presentation

The facilitators from each of the four breakout sessions presented the prioritized responses to the questions during a combined plenary session. The priorities presented by the breakout group moderators during the plenary session were used to determine the priorities presented in this report. A copy of the plenary presentation is attached to this report.

Data Analysis

For this document, the information collected has been grouped together under headings which were determined during data analysis (as opposed to by the breakout groups). These headings have been used for the purpose of highlighting areas where consensus and non-consensus might exist.

Question #1: What are the Strengths of the Current NELAC/NELAP? What are the areas for improvement?

Strengths

- **Mutual Recognition**
  The national standard has provided a mechanism for reciprocity and the mutual recognition of accreditations.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Mutual recognition
  - Afforded some reciprocity

- **Improved Quality**
  Standards written with performance approach along with a quality systems approach were cited as resulting in improved laboratory assessments, improvements in data quality, and improvements in data quality. The international standard (ISO 17025) and the audit of the Accrediting Authorities were also noted to have contributed to an improvement in quality.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Uses quality system approach
  - Increased status through accreditation – labs are better
  - Labs held to higher standards
  - Advocate performance approach
  - Improvement in assessment of labs
  - Discussion of ethics
  - International (ISO 17025) quality system
  - Audit of AAs
  - Improvement to some state programs
  - NELAC labs provide a better quality product due to quality system helped by auditing
  - Enhanced PT programs by development of acceptance criteria

- **Uniformity**
  A national standard using common terminology, consistent on-site audits has provided uniform data quality for decision makers.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Uniform data quality – better decisions made by court and other decision makers
  - Encourages uniformity
  - A quality system with common terminology
  - Uniformity of assessments
  - Consistent on-site audits
  - Unified DoD quality programs
  - Force to unify EPA programs

- **National Collaboration/Communication**
  Networking has improved communications and the cooperative effort between federal, state and private entities.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - National standard
  - Cooperative effort between States and Federal government
  - Networking to discuss standards
  - Barriers to entry – fewer in NELAC/NELAP program
  - Brings the community together to standardize
  - Shared information
  - Communication
  - Communication among AAs, regulated and regulator communities
  - Provides a forum for stakeholder communication

- **Proven track record and expertise**
  The NELAP program is known and recognized as based on practical expertise

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Proven track record
  - Works very well for drinking water type programs
  - Works well for other types of programs
  - Current players are the experts; the organization has a lot of knowledge and expertise
  - Stability
  - Name recognition for the program
  - Original goals have been meet except for limited participation
  - Known and recognized in the community
  - Widely recognized
  - Name recognition for NELAC/NELAP
  - Sense of history; experience

- **Other**
  Additional strengths for the program included training (for assessors and evaluators), reduced costs (from fewer audits), flexibility to expand/improve the program, wide participation, growth potential, infrastructure, and EPA mandate/involvement.

  - Comments from breakout groups on training:
    - Required training and qualifications for assessors
    - NELAC/NELAP training and networking
    - Improved assessor training

- Comments from breakout groups on reduced costs:
  - Reduced because there are fewer audits
  - Unified DoD quality programs resulting in a decreased burden to labs providing services to DoD
  - Saving money by using ISO 17025 and not re-inventing the wheel

- Comments from breakout groups on flexibility to expand/improve the program:
  - One size does fit all.
  - Flexibility, ability to update standards (quicker process than EPA)
  - Has evolved since its earliest version
  - Flexibility
  - Expansion of PT samples to RCRA, etc., and other matrices

- Comments from breakout groups on wide participation:
  - Diversity
  - Private sector involvement
  - Variety of stakeholders
  - Standard developed by consensus

- Comments from breakout groups on growth potential:
  - Still new people coming in; is growing and still maintains interest

- Comments from breakout groups on infrastructure:
  - Structure and framework

- Comments from breakout groups on EPA mandate/involvement:
  - EPA mandate helps marketing

Areas for Improvement

- **Program weaknesses/inconsistencies**
  Improvements to the program are needed, to include addressing its inconsistent implementation.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Strengths could be improved
  - A lot of language that can be interpreted different ways
  - Need greater clarity about the policies and procedures
  - Uniform interpretation and consistent implementation (both states and individual assessors)
  - Need additional consistency in the interpretation of the standard
  - Two-tiered programs in some States requires NELAP plus State program
  - States with multi-tier programs
  - Inconsistency from State to State in assessments or implementation
  - Inconsistencies between the states in their implementation of accreditation
  - Fewer audits mean less oversight
  - Program –specific criteria not covered through audit process for most labs (need federal lead)
  - Weak in certain field (radiochemistry, biology, microbiology, etc.)
  - Do not have PTs to cover all areas
  - Need supplemental information (such as use of DOD grey boxes) to expand upon and provide technical assistance/clarification to areas missing from current standard
  - Lack of coordination between the AAs
  - National standard not adequate to meet all the needs of the States
  - Does not accommodate different state regulations
  - Lack of clear management structure for conflict resolution
  - Quality is method driven not data driven
  - Ineffective self policing by the AAs of consensus policies
  - Need more technical review of the data
  - Not all AAs are full service
  - Standard does not incorporate enough of the international standards to be recognized as such
  - Too focused on ISO
  - Standard puts too much focus on quality systems and not on technical standards
  - Program cannot guarantee quality no matter how many standards; too many specifics
  - Too many PT sample analytes
  - No mechanism for change or improvement
  - Difficult to change standard or correct identified deficiencies. NELAC can only request change – cannot do it

- **Limited participation**
  The lack of buy-in by EPA programs, as well as limited participation by states and laboratories, results in a program that does not have a true national scope.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - No national accreditation program (i.e., not everyone is using it)
  - We have only 20% participation
  - Too few states are AAs
  - State Buy-in not happening
    - Root cause - EPA programs lack of participation
  - Limited participation from private sector
  - Lack of buy-in by EPA Programs
  - Lack of support of program offices, require data of know quality with lack of accountability
  - Biggest weakness – lack of participation/involvement by stakeholders (need more EPA programs on board, more state AAs or reciprocity agreements, more labs certified) (3)

- **Program is voluntary**
  There is no federal mandate or regulatory requirement for participation.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - No incentive for some States to join
  - No federal regulatory driver.
  - No mechanism to apply pressure to non-participating States (to participate or not leave); too voluntary
  - No national regulatory requirement for State or EPA programs to participate in NELAP
  - Not all EPA programs on board
  - Need a federal mandate/policy or guidance to require all data in support of EPA programs to come from NELAC certified labs
  - No authority without EPA mandate
    - This is politics
    - State rules are based on EPA mandate
    - There is a model in the feds – drinking water program - required program makes it successful
    - They do it as a public health issue – other programs don't see accreditation as a public health issue
    - Money is attached

- **Cost**
  Although the number of audits has reduced costs, other costs (e.g., proficiency tests, secondary accreditations, etc.) have increased. Additionally, it is expensive to become an Accrediting Authority (AA). This results in a competitive disadvantage.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Costs for proficiency tests (used to be free but now there are commercial providers)
  - Accreditation costs to labs have quadrupled
  - 2°accreditation costs
  - System of primary and secondary accreditation is costly
  - Cost is weakness – used to have free pts – now commercial providers
  - Cost of PT samples too high
  - No value in secondary accreditation – costs are high
  - Expensive to implement NELAP at State level (become an AA)
  - Perception is that it will be too difficult for smaller labs (although really just a paradigm shift, requires start up costs to convert to a quality systems approach
  - Poor cost containment
  - Not all labs are NELAC accredited, creating a competitive disadvantage

- **Fragmented structure**
  Fragmentation (e.g., the separation of standard development and adoption, and multiple primary AAs) has resulted in a non-responsive, complex system with leadership issues, leaving some stakeholders disconnected from the process.

  Comments from breakout groups:
  - Structure is a weakness – dividing standards development from program implementation has created a gulf
  - Current standard updating process is cumbersome
  - Changes in the standard take too long
  - Lack of someone taking leadership (EPA/States)
  - States not accepting onsite NELAC audits (i.e., lack of authority)
  - Current separation of standards development and adoption leads the private sector to feel disconnected from the process – find a bridge between standard development and adoption to include private sector

- **Other**
  Additional areas for improvement include: communication (including the lack of a database and web site improvements), marketing and recognition for the program, reciprocity, and training (needed for all levels of participation).

  - Comments from breakout groups on communication:
    - Lack of a functional database to find out what other AAs are doing
    - Web site needs to be improved
    - Very little interaction between states that are AAs and states that are not (for example, in the case of non-NELAP labs with certification from both their state and another AA state
    - Supplemental state requirements are not communicated well
    - Need to provide a quicker response to emerging IT issues. Web site must be updated in real time to provide more timely communication with stake holders

  - Comments from breakout groups on marketing and recognition for the program:
    - We are invisible to outsiders (non-NELAC) states
    - "What's in it for me" not clear
    - Need proof the NELAC/NELAP program is effective
    - No value in secondary accreditation – costs are high
    - Lost NIST association
    - Needs to reach out to programs to find out what is needed (e.g., solid waste)
    - Lack of outreach or a public relations process
    - Still not nationally and internationally accepted standard
    - Perception is that it will be too difficult for smaller labs (although really just a paradigm shift, requires start up costs to convert to a quality systems approach
    - Misconception that NELAC only applies to large laboratories
    - Elevate NELAC not as a minimum standard but as a STANDARD
    - Increase NELAC's visibility (get the word out) – remove impression NELAC is part of EPA
    - Sell benefits
    - Perception among smaller labs that the standards discriminate against them (favors big labs) and it is a bigger burden for smaller labs to meet NELAC standards than bigger labs
    - Perceived lack of value for NELAC certification by labs – NELAC needs to identify the value and sell it – need to market the cachet of NELAC certification
    - Need to look at ourselves as educators and sell NELAC

- Comments from breakout groups on reciprocity:
  - Difficult to differences in states (i.e., different analyte lists), inconsistent fields of testing, accreditation application is different by State, not consistent with NELAP
  - Labs still need multiple primary accreditations due to lack of reciprocity and complexity of multiple state requirements

- Comments from breakout groups on training:
  - Need better communication on how standards do apply to all
  - Costs of training
  - There needs to be more training at every level
  - Technical qualification of laboratory assessors is insufficient for areas they are auditing. Need improved/more training to ensure consistency of assessors
  - NELAC needs to continue to develop the standard and the content of meetings to allow the private sector to feel involved in the process

Question #2: What key services should the NEXT GENERATION provide?

- **Standards development and adoption**
  Both standards development and adoption should be included in the Next Generation. Most responses also favored accepting standards from other organizations as well.

  Comments:
  - Return to old NELAC – standards development and adoption within same organizational structure – but accept standards from other organizations
  - Make flexible standards, compatible with how programs are run, based on stakeholder needs
  - Develop the standards
  - Standards adoption organization
  - Provide continually improving evolving standard – need a mechanism to modify standard
  - Scope of environmental lab services has evolved, therefore, the scope of accreditation needs to evolve to new and emerging areas of analysis
  - Flexibility for regulators to expand scope of accreditation in response to stakeholder needs/requests
  - Provide a more reasonable/flexible implementation plan to lower the bar for non-participating states
  - Integrate standards development and adoption
  - Remove fragmentation
  - Controlled standards development (i.e., should not be sole focus)
  - Bring everything back together
  - Should include adopting standards, oversight of program, training and education, accreditation
  - SDO (standards development organization) structure not working – cannot get standards to vote on
  - Standards all states can use (+ feds)
  - Address “add on” issue
  - Standards with well defined goals (apply quality system standard to specific methods)
  - Standard that address “what you need to do” instead of how

- **Participation**
  Provide full and equal stakeholder participation with recognition of other, similar entities.

  Comments:
  - Full and equal participation by all stakeholders
  - Involve private sector
  - Broad participation
  - Buy-in and participation by private sector
  - Recognize other similar entities

- **Training/Education/Information**
  Training and education as well as information distribution were identified as services to be provided. The database and web were frequently cited as mechanism to be used.

  Comments:
  - Standardized technical and administrative training (with consistent scope – a standard for training and easy access)
  - Mentoring program (existing States help new State through process)
  - Develop mentoring program for states that want nothing to do with NELAC (e.g., fund paid position to help nonparticipating states determine where to go to get started)
  - Offer effective training programs
  - Comprehensive information management
  - Forum services
  - Facilitate annual and interim forum
  - Resource for training (provide for a fee as opposed to subcontracting it out or referring people to other organizations
  - Provide tools and templates to help small businesses meet requirements as scopes of accreditation evolve
  - Provide business plan assistance, legal/regulatory assistance on how to for NELAC participation at the state level
  - Provide assistance to state agencies not in the program on how to get into the program
  - Should include training and education
    - To labs, assessors
    - Education to potential clients (including government) data users
    - Implementation tools (training, templates, etc.) need to be readily available (on-line)
  - Information on web, standards, organize web
  - Public relations = web site – must be clear
  - Enhanced IT – National database/website
  - Develop a database of NELAC certified labs, where they are approved and for which methods/matrices/analyses
  - Maintain a national database - Infrastructure to allow accessibility to a national database
  - Disseminate information, communicate with community
  - How to documents that are not part of the standard
  - Database and web services – communication services
  - Internships/partnerships with universities to get chemists trained in quality system concepts
  - Provide technical services (in accreditation and operation) to labs seeking accreditation or already with it
  - Continuation of development of on-line training modules (NELAC University?)
  - Have training that is "branded" as NELAC to provide consistency (even if it is subcontracted or provided by third parties) – NELAC certified training

- **Advocacy**
  Marketing the program to include advocating for a performance approach and the promotion of the program to legislators is needed. The ability to measure and document benefits of the program is needed for support the advocacy effort.

  Comments:
  - (Advocate) mechanism for performance based approach and standards for methods development and validation – need to promote to EPA, states
  - Promote buy-in by State Legislators and Congress at national level
  - Measure and document benefits of program
  - Market program
  - Strong outreach program
  - Recognition of our moral authority as protectors of the public health
  - Marketable products to help with self-sufficiency
  - Public relations to public and universities to get quality system concept more accepted – include quality theory as part of the curriculum for chemists
  - Remove the fear factor for non-participating states
  - Encourage participation without requiring all states to be AAs
  - Advance concept of reciprocity
  - Promote outreach to states that are not AAs
  - Support continuing development of PBMS approach
  - Provide/sell accreditation of AAs as a product
  - Market what membership in NELAC includes (training, support, technical assistance)

- **Structure**
  The program should be self-governing and be professionally managed (not volunteers).

  Comments:
  - Professional management system – not volunteers – answerable to the organization
  - Have states and EPA buy into the third part professional management
  - Paid administrative support
  - Revenue generating
  - Run like a business with paid staff
  - Self governing body with oversight of AAs
  - Funding self-sufficiency
  - Effective self governance policies
  - Support of administrative functions such as minute taking
  - Allocate resources as needed – customer driven
  - Have federal oversight and participation
  - Retain focus through better integration of all aspects
  - Need central point of contact within NELAC that is available to help shepherd states into NELAC

- **Oversight**
  The next generation should provide oversight all areas of the program to include AAs and laboratory accreditation.

  Comments:
  - Accrediting oversight body to international standards
  - Should include oversight of program and accreditation
  - Accredit
  - Recognize AAs
  - Document control
  - Focus on all aspects of the program not just one thing (e.g., standards development)
  - Assess professional and experience requirements (qualifications) for accredited parties and assessors and evaluators
  - Uniform document application process (will help with secondary accreditation)
  - Mechanism to solicit feedback from labs to identify where there are inconsistencies in assessments, etc.
  - Self evaluation – continue to monitor and measure our own progress
  - Resolve conflicts with accreditation requirements (accredited methods) and permit/regulatory requirements
  - Mediate and facilitate conflict resolution
  - Evaluation and accreditation of NELAC authorities
  - Evaluating AAs and accrediting PT authorities
  - Recognize PT providers
  - Uniform certification or qualification of analysts
  - Conflict review board
  - Streamline – make less complex
  - Need stability so standards do not change so quickly

- **Other**
  Quality was also cited as a key area.

  - Comment on quality:
    - EPA regulations don't define quality

Question #3: What characteristics should the NEXT GENERATION have to encourage more participation?

Reciprocity

True reciprocity with uniform application and acceptance of accreditation across states is needed.

Comment:

- Uniform application and acceptance of accreditation across states (true reciprocity)

Marketing and Advocacy

The Next Generation should have a strategic marketing plan with specific targets and launch a public relations effort to seek support for data quality requirement. Legislators should be included in this effort.

Comments:

- Ability to apply political pressure to EPA and government
- Meaningful customer recognition – incentive to use NELAC Laboratory
- Strategic marketing with specific target
- Federal procurement initiative requiring NELAC participation by labs
- Define the market
- Public relations to stakeholders and legislators (What's in it for me?)
- Find alternatives to "mandates". Seek out (court) other EPA programs.
- Start with office of water
- Better marketing
- Flexibility for new markets and stake holders
- Target the small labs
  - Provide tools, how to training
  - Have a simplified approach and simplified standards
- Seek legislation that requires EPA programs to have the same data quality programs like the water program
- Be perceived as adding value to the participants
- Market NEALC across all EPA programs
  - Focus on positives and enhance existing relationship with OW/DW
  - Demonstrate to other programs that standard are as good/better than existing EPA program requirements

Structure
The Next Generation should be a legally identifiable entity with strong EPA support and acceptance/endorsement by EPA programs. It should be consensus-based, pool AA resources and retain the NELAC/NELAP name, if possible.

Comments:
- Become a legally identifiable entity
- Equality among stakeholders
- Consistent legal representation
- Retain NELAC/NEAP (as acronym and name – currently EPA trademark – retain history)
- Establish NELAC as its own brand
- Heavy EPA involvement
- Minimal EPA control
- EPA oversight
- Maintain EPA involvement (EPA/states believe they have the authority to accredit labs; trade organizations want some EPA involvement in accreditation because that is what their clients expect and want
- States (primacy labs) want to be accredited by EPA
- Strong EPA support
- National AAs not by state
- Inclusion and acceptance of non-governmental accrediting bodies
- Require EPA program offices to participate
- Promote 3rd party services
- AAs to subcontract assessments to gain expertise – to give AAs ability for broader accreditation
- Maintain use of 3rd party non-government assessors and include/add 3rd party accrediting authorities
- Use only government accreditors
- Assessor Pools
  - Mixed team
  - Follow up team different than original team
- Uses a pool of national assessors with a wider degree of technical expertise (allows broader scope of accreditation from a single source and eliminates the need to get multiple primacy certifications to cover all areas). Would help states not AAs
- Provide a mechanism to obtain primary accreditation from whoever will give the coverage needed rather than piece meal, starting with home state
- Become a stable, efficient organization
- Absolute independence from EPA
- Open and accessible to all stake holders; continue as a consensus-based body
- Viewed as a professional organization
- Move NELAP office within EPA (out of ORD, perhaps into OW)
- Become independence organization EPA wants to interact with
- Succession planning – to fill in gaps with retirement

- Mechanism for state or AA to be responsible for ensuring the level of quality of data submitted to their states
- Seek legislation that requires EPA programs to have the same data quality programs like the water program

Improved product

The program should offer an improved product; i.e., be streamlined (to include templates and plainly defined requirements) and expanded to include field measurements and data integrity/compliance audits. It should also be expandable, timely and responsive.

Comments:

- Broader applicability to a wider range of programs and beyond EPA
- Modular standard that can be tailored to needs of different labs
- Needs react quickly to make changes and be more flexible for the stakeholders
- Have a single message or voice to make the changes for implementation
- Retain drinking water program and other current support
- Include international community (get recognition) – ISO compliant
- Make use of consensus developed standards
- Goal should be a single accreditation covering all fields (technology, methods, quality) a laboratory needs
- Flexibility to get accreditation from any AA (not just their home states (one stop shopping).
- Better uniformity
- Steam line
  - Quality manual template
  - Define requirements plainly (especially for small labs)
- Audits that determine data integrity and compliance
- Add program areas (as they apply to environmental work)
  - Field measurements
  - Homeland security
  - DOA type of testing

Other

Additional suggestions included providing needed training and education, and developing a business model to allow the program to be cost effective.

- Comments on training and education
  - Educational system (outreach to States that are interested but not participating, speaker's bureau)
  - Provide needed training
  - Have a mentoring service for non-AA states and be a source of information to promote inclusions
  - Become a center of expertise

- Comments on costs
  - Cost effective; lower implementation costs for states and labs
  - Lower costs
  - Financially endowed or independently wealthy to encourage participation
  - Cost effective/business model

Question #4: What is the membership in the NEXT GENERATION?

Include all stakeholders

All breakout groups advocated the inclusion of all stakeholders. Various suggestions for stakeholders were provided in the comments from the breakout sessions.

Comments:

- All Stake holders
  - Individuals or organizations
- Sampling firms
- Environmental labs
  - Commercial
  - Government
- State AAs
- Non government AAs
- Any attendees
- Individuals doing accreditation
- Real estate (with environmental interests)
- Feds
- Generators
- Users
  - Engineering firms, municipalities, industry
- Regulators
- Assessors
- Lab suppliers
- Not just lab based – include business savvy professionals
- Environmental trade organizations e.g., WEF, environmentalists such as Sierra Club
- Academic community
- International
- Other sovereign nations, tribal nations
- Young professionals – junior members
- Other
  - Engineering firms
  - University safety officers
  - Researchers
  - Industry
  - Industrial trade associations, water and wastewater associations
  - PT providers
  - PT oversight bodies
  - Voluntary monitoring groups
  - Consultants (geologists, etc.)
  - Other standards setting and writing groups
  - Environmental attorneys
  - Legislators/Regulators (Federal, State, municipal); State regulatory authorities, permit grantors; municipal governments

Other "What" questions

Additional questions included:

- What authority will NELAP operate under?
- What are issues relating to reciprocity among the states?
- What are the issues of true non-participants?
- What are the barriers to participating states becoming full AAs
- What will the states accept for the NEXT GENERATION?
- What systems can be established to balance flexibility with strict proscribed standards?
- What does the NEXT GENERATION need to do if the current NELAC standard is copyrighted?
- Can we reconcile conflictions between multiple programs?
- What can be done about timely responses to technology changes?
- What will be done to accommodate perceived needs?
  - For certifying field testers and samplers?
  - For individual analyst certification?
  - For standard for data validations?
  - For guidance on measurement quality objectives?
  - For developing standards to encompass all areas of environmental testing?
- What other organizations will we consider cooperative agreements with?
- What is NELAC's international accreditation role?
- What is NELAC's role for international accreditation?
- What are the standards for data validation?

Appendix 1:
Minutes from Breakout Sessions

Minutes **Self-Sufficiency Breakout Group #1**

The session was facilitated by Silky Labie (FL DEP), with assistance from Pat Hurr (USEPA).

1. **What are the strengths of the current NELAC/NELAP? What are the areas for improvement?**

Strengths:

- Works very well for drinking water type programs
- Works well for other types of programs
- Encourages **uniformity**; brings the community together to standardize
- Current players are the experts; the organization has a lot of knowledge and expertise
- Uses a quality systems approach
- Diversity
- Stability
- Cooperative effort between States and Federal government
- Still new people coming in; is growing and still maintains interest
- Private sector involvement
- Known and recognized in the community
- Has evolved since its earliest version
- Original goals set have been achieved except for limited participation
- Flexibility, ability to update standards (quicker process than EPA)
- Mutual recognition

Top Priority Strengths:

1. Expertise
2. Mutual Recognition
3. Quality Systems Approach
4. Cooperative Effort between States, Federal and Private
5. Known and Recognized

Areas for Improvement:

- Designed for single application program and evolved to become a barrier to performance based approach and innovation to technologies; does not work for multi-media programs
- A lot of language that can be interpreted different ways
- Inconsistency from State to State in assessments or implementation
- Accreditation costs to labs have quadrupled
- Reciprocity difficult due to differences in States (i.e., different analyte lists), inconsistent Fields of Testing; accreditation application is different by State, not consistent within NELAP
- Two-tiered programs in some States requires NELAP plus State program
- Current standard updating process is cumbersome

- No mechanism to apply pressure to non-participating States (to participate or not leave); too voluntary
- Lack of buy-in by EPA Programs
- No national regulatory requirement for State or EPA Programs to participate in NELAP
- Can not guarantee quality, no matter how many standards; too many specifics
- No incentive for some States to join
- Perception that too difficult for smaller labs (although really just a paradigm shift, requires start up costs to convert to a quality system approach)
- Still not nationally and internationally accepted standard
- Weak in certain fields (radiochemistry, biology, microbiology, etc.)
- Lack of outreach or a public relations process
- Needs to reach out to programs to find out what is needed (e.g., solid waste)
- Cost of training
- Expensive to implement NELAP at State level (become an AA)

Top Priority Areas for Improvement:

1. Uniformity of interpretation
2. Lack of buy-in by EPA programs
3. Inconsistent Fields of Testing, multiple applications for accreditation
4. No regulatory requirement at the Federal level
5. States with Two-tiered program
6. No incentive to non-NELAP States to join

2. What key services should THE NEXT GENERATION provide? For example, should it be a standards development body and if yes, what types of standards?

- Return to old NELAC – Standards development and adoption within same organizational structure, although still accept standards from other organizations
- Make flexible standards, compatible with how programs are run, based on stakeholder needs
- Standardized technical and administrative training (with consistent scope – a standard for training and easy access)
- Assess professional and experience requirements (qualifications) for accredited parties and assessors and evaluators
- Full and equal participation by all stakeholder groups (Federal, State, Laboratories, Other)
- Uniform document application process (will help with secondary accreditation)
- Promote buy-in by State legislators and Congress at national level
- Mentoring program (existing States help new State through process)
- Mechanism to solicit feedback from labs to identify where there are inconsistencies in assessments, etc.
- Disseminate information, communicate with community
- Measure and document benefits of program
- Marketing of program

- Resolve conflicts with accreditation requirements (accredited methods) and permit/regulatory requirements
- Implementation tools (training, templates, etc.) need to be readily available (online)
- Standard with well defined goals (apply quality system standard to specific methods)
- How-to documents that are not part of the standard
- Standards that address "what you need to do" instead of how

Top Priority Key Services:
1. Full and equal stakeholder participation
2. Mechanism to solicit feedback/communication
3. Old NELAC but better (develop and adopt Standards, accept standards from other SDOs)
4. Technical and administrative training (with easy access)
5. Measure and document benefits of program
6. Access to "How To" Documents

3. What characteristics should THE NEXT GENERATION have to encourage more participation? For example, more states becoming AAs or broader inclusion of other environmental programs (e.g., waste water, air, solid waste, pesticides, etc.).

- Equality among stakeholders
- Better marketing
- Broader applicability, to a wider range of programs and beyond EPA
- Target the small lab (provide tools, how to's, training, etc. and have a more simplified process and simplified standards)
- Modular standard that can be tailored to needs of different labs
- Cost effective; lower implementation costs for both States and labs
- Uniform application and acceptance of accreditation across States (true reciprocity)
- National AA, not by State
- Ability to apply political pressure to EPA and government
- Inclusion and acceptance of non-governmental accrediting bodies
- Education system (outreach to States that are interested but not participating, speaker's bureau)
- Lower costs
- Meaningful customer recognition – incentive to use NELAC laboratory
- Consistent legal representation
- Ability to retain NELAC/NELAP (as acronym and name; currently EPA trademark; retain history)
- Retain Drinking Water program and other current support
- Include international community (get recognition); ISO compliance
- Heavy EPA involvement
- Minimal EPA control
- EPA oversight
- Strong EPA support

Top Priority Characteristics:
1. Strong EPA Support
2. Retain NELAC/NELAP name
3. Full and equal participation by all stakeholders
4. NELAP accreditation that is meaningful
5. "True" Reciprocity

4. What is the membership in THE NEXT GENERATION?

- All stakeholders
- States
- Federal government
- Laboratories
- Other:
  - Engineering firms
  - University safety officers
  - Researchers
  - Industry
  - Industrial trade associations, water and wastewater associations
  - PT providers
  - PT Oversight Bodies
  - Voluntary monitoring groups
  - Private assessors
  - Concerned citizens groups
  - Consultants (geologists, etc.)
  - Other standards setting and writing groups
  - Environmental attorneys
  - Legislators/Regulators (Federal, State, municipal; (State regulatory authorities, permit grantors; municipal governments)

5. Other "WHAT" questions are allowed if time permits.

- What authority will NELAP operate under?
- How should the group address cost issues (even though it didn't come out as a high priority issue)?
- How would non-participants respond? Identify and establish dialogue with true non-participants.
- What are the costs and benefits to the program? (as support for the costs for accreditation)
- Why are there only 13 NELAP states? How to address the issue of control and the conflict with a desire for reciprocity? Issue is trust; fears that other States are less rigorous.
- What can be done about States with not enough personnel to become AA that still require NELAP-accreditation? Define various levels of participation. What are the barriers, costs for States to become a full AA?

Minutes **Self-Sufficiency Breakout Group #2**

The breakout was facilitated by Alfredo Sotomayor (WI DNR), with assistance from Ann Marie Allen (MA DEP). The group identified responses to each of the five questions and prioritized the top three responses for questions 1, 2 and 3.

6. What are the strengths of the current NELAC/NELAP? What are the areas for improvement?

Strengths:

- National Standard
- Variety of stakeholders
- Quality System
- Shared information
- Improvement in assessment of labs
- Discussion of ethics
- Required training and qualifications for assessors
- Uniformity of assessments
- International Quality system
- Widely recognized
- Flexibility
- Allows for possibility of the performance-based approach
- Communication
- Expansion of PT samples to RCRA, etc., and other matrices
- Communication among AAs, regulated and regulator communities
- Structure and framework
- Consistent on-site audits
- Audit of AAs

Top Priority Strengths:

1. National Standard has allowed mutual recognition
2. Quality System
3. Improvement in lab assessments

Areas for Improvement:

- Lack of coordination between the accrediting authorities
- Lack of a functional data base to find out what other AAs are doing
- Poor cost containment
- Not all the EPA programs on board
- Not all labs are NELAC accredited, creating a competitive disadvantage
- National Standard not adequate to meet all the needs of the States
- Need additional consistency in the interpretation of the Standard
- There are too many PT sample analytes
- Changes in the Standard take too long to make

- Lack of a clear management structure for conflict resolution
- Quality is method driven not data driven
- There needs to be more training at every level
- Ineffective self-policing by the AAs of consensus policies
- No mechanism for change or improvement
- Inconsistencies between the states in their implementation of accreditation
- Need more technical review of data
- Cost of PT samples is too high
- System of primary and secondary accreditation of labs is costly
- Website needs to be improved
- Not all of the accrediting authorities are full service
- Very little interaction between states that are AAs and states that are not (for example, in the case of non-NELAP labs with certification from both their state and another AA state)
- Need greater clarity about the policies and procedures
- Supplemental state requirements are not communicated well
- Too few states are accrediting authorities
- Lack of support of program offices, require data of known quality with lack of accountability
- The misconception that NELAC only applies to large laboratories
- States with multi-tier programs
- Lack of someone taking leadership (EPA/States)
- Elevate NELAC not as a minimum standard but as a STANDARD
- States not accepting onsite NELAC audits (i.e., lack of authority)
- NELAP it is not an internationally recognized standard
- Standard does not incorporate enough of the international standards to be recognized as such

Top Priority Areas for Improvement:

1. Other EPA offices not on board
2. Inconsistent interpretation of Standard
3 Lack of a database

2. What key services should THE NEXT GENERATION provide? For example, should it be a standards development body and if yes, what types of standards?

- Standards adoption organization
- Effective self governance policies
- Offer effective training programs
- Comprehensive information management
- Strong outreach program
- Accrediting oversight body to international standards
- Involve the private sector
- Forum services

- Database and web services – communication services
- Recognition of our moral authority as protectors of the public health
- Mediate and facilitate conflict resolution
- Evaluation and accreditation of NELAC authorities
- Evaluating AAs and accrediting PT authorities
- Facilitate annual and interim Forum
- Support of administrative functions such as minute taking
- Allocate resources where needed – customer driven
- Uniform certification or qualification of analysts
- Funding self-sufficiency
- Need a professional management system, not volunteers
- Marketable products to help with self-sufficiency
- Professional management that is responsible to the organization
- Have Federal oversight and participation
- Need for an effective conflict review board
- Have the states and EPA buy into the third party professional management
- Develop standards

Top Priority Key Services:

1. Standards adoption
2. Manages information comprehensively
3. Managed professionally not by volunteers

3. What characteristics should THE NEXT GENERATION have to encourage more participation? For example, more states becoming AAs or broader inclusion of other environmental programs (e.g., waste water, air, solid waste, pesticides, etc.).

- Flexibility for new markets and stakeholders
- Provide training that is needed
- Make use of consensus developed standards
- Mechanism for state or AA to be responsible for ensuring the level of quality of data submitted to their state
- Seek legislation that requires EPA programs to have the same data quality programs like the water program
- Require EPA program offices to participate
- Financially endowed or independently wealthy to encourage participation
- Promotion of third party services
- Facilitate small organization participation
- Needs to be responsive in a timely manner and react quickly to make changes and adapt and be more flexible for the stakeholders
- Have a mentoring service for non-AA states and be a source of information to promote inclusion
- Have a single message or voice to make the changes for implementation
- Become a center of expertise

- Be more efficient, stable organization
- Be perceived as adding value to the participants

Top Priority Characteristics:

1. Flexible, expandable, timely and responsive
2. Seek legislation requiring all EPA programs to have the same data quality requirements
3. Endorsed by all EPA programs

4. What is the membership in THE NEXT GENERATION?

- All stakeholders such as generators and users and regulators and assessors, etc.

5. Other "WHAT" questions are allowed if time permits.

- What would the States accept?
- What should the new charter look like?
- Where is the balanced between flexibility and strict prescribed standards?
- Where is the balance between the regulator and the need to produce data of known and documented quality? Between regulators and regulated?
- What problems arise if the next generation makes use of parts of the current Standard that are copyrighted?
- How can mutually exclusive program requirements be reconciled?
- How can NELAC keep an eye on the future to develop the resources to be there when needed?

Minutes **Self-Sufficiency Breakout Group #3**

The session was facilitated by Aurora Shields (KS Dept of Health and Environment), with assistance from Barbara Finazzo (USEPA, Region 2).

"Rules":

- Everyone is encouraged to participate in the discussion session. Additionally, the questionnaire may be used to submit ideas.

During the discussion session, focus on the four core "what" questions.

- Ideas may be discussed so they are well understood, but there are no "bad" ideas.
- Other issues may be discussed as time permits

7. What are the strengths of the current NELAC/NELAP? What are the areas for improvement?

Strengths:

- We have a standard (We may not all agree on the details and there are areas in need of improvement, but it is arguably operable and it is an asset.)
- We have a standard developed by consensus and applicable across multiple programs
- Name recognition for NELAC and NELAP
- Afforded some reciprocity
- Absorbed requirements of ISO 17025
- Improvement of some state programs (e.g., New Hampshire) as a result of having a standard accreditation process
- NELAC labs overall provide a better quality product due to their shift to quality system approach and are helped by the auditing program
- Improvement of assessor training
- Provided a platform to help laboratory networks (e.g., STL) build a uniform quality system within their organization
- Provides a forum for stakeholder communication
- As a result of consistent people being involved throughout our 12 year process, there is a sense of history; we know more now because we have tried many models and we can use history/experience to move forward.
- The use of the NELAC standard has helped unify DoD quality programs (pre-NELAC DoD had several very diverse programs with differing requirements – resulting in a significant decrease in burden on labs which provide service DoD).
- NELAC can serve as an external program to push EPA programs to unify their requirements (such as with DoD)
- Saving money by following lead of ISO 17025 and not reinventing the wheel
- Enhanced the PT program by development of acceptance criteria

Areas for Improvement:

- The Standard has taken some resources/highlights off of technical issues (there is still a need for technical standards) and puts too much focus on quality systems (this was perceived to be both a strength and weakness)
- Need supplemental information (such as use of DoD "grey boxes") to expand upon and provide technical assistance/clarification to areas missing from current standard
- NELAC is too focused on following ISO – Are we playing catch-up or our own game? Should we invest our meager resources in something else and just accept ISO?
- Do not currently have PTs to cover all areas.
- Program-specific criteria not covered through audit process for most laboratories (solving this will require federal lead, perhaps addressed when programs come together)
- Currently does not accommodate different state regulations; NELAC does not incorporate program specific criteria for those states that have adopted them
- Need uniform interpretation and consistent implementation (by both states and individual assessors) – When federal programs become more consistent in acceptance of the NELAC standard the states' requirements will become consistent.
- Need a Federal mandate/policy or guidance to require all data in support of EPA programs to come from NELAC certified labs
- Increase NELAC's visibility (need to get the word out that "We are NELAC – we are an accreditation authority"; remove impression/stigma that NELAC is part of EPA; identify and sell the benefits that we provide)
- **BIGGEST WEAKNESS: Lack of participation/involvement by stakeholders (need more EPA programs on board, more state accrediting authorities or reciprocity agreements, more labs getting certified).**
- Difficult to change standard to correct identified deficiencies. NELAC has to request the change, they can not change it.
- Need to be able to provide a quicker response to emerging IT issues; NELAC website must be able to be updated in real time to ensure more timely communication with stake holders
- Laboratories still need multiple primary accreditations due to lack of reciprocity and complexity of multiple state requirements
- Technical qualification of laboratory assessors is insufficient for areas they are auditing/Need improved/more training to ensure consistency of assessors
- There is a perception amongst smaller labs that the standards discriminate against them (favors big labs) and that it is a bigger burden for smaller laboratories to meet NELAC standards than bigger laboratories.
- There is a perceived lack of value of NELAC certification by labs, therefore NELAC needs to identify the value of being NELAC certified and sell it; need to market the cachet of NELAC certification.

- NELAC needs to continue to develop the standard and the content of meetings to allow the private sector to feel involved in process. The current separation of standards development and adoption leads the private sector to feel disconnected from the process. NELAC needs to find a bridge between standard development and adoption to include the private sector.
- We need to look at ourselves as educators to "sell NELAC".

8. What key services should THE NEXT GENERATION provide? For example, should it be a standards development body and if yes, what types of standards?

- Public Relations – to public sector and universities to get the quality system concept to be more universally accepted and more widely known; need to get quality system theory included as part of the curriculum for upcoming chemists.
- Internships/partnerships with universities to get next generation of chemist trained in quality system concepts.
- Enhanced IT: National database/website. Develop a database of NELAC certified labs, where they're approved and for which methods/matrices/analytes; needs to be broad to be useful to multiple organizations/audiences
- Provide a continually improving/evolving standard (need a mechanism to modify standard).
- The scope of environmental laboratory services has evolved, therefore the scope of accreditation needs to evolve to respond to new and emerging areas of analysis.
- Flexibility for regulators to expand scope of accreditation in response to stakeholder needs/requests.
- NELAC can be a resource for training (provide it for a fee as opposed to subcontracting it out or referring people to other organizations) and provide tools and templates to help small businesses meet requirements as scopes of accreditation evolve
- Provide assistance to state agencies not currently in program on how to get into the program. Remove the perceived barrier for non-participating states (remove "fear-factor"), provide business plan assistance, legal/regulatory assistance on how to NELAC participation at their state level.
- Encourage participation in the program with out requiring all states to be accrediting authorities (AAs); advance the concept of reciprocity, get them to accept NELAC (promote outreach to states that are not AAs on benefits of NELAC participation).
- Provide a more reasonable/flexible implementation plan to lower the bar for non-participating states
- The next generation of the NELAC standard needs to be more streamlined, less complex, and integrate both standard development and adoption.
- Still need stability so standards are not changing so quickly
- Regain our focus through better integration of all aspects.
- Self Evaluation – Continue to monitor and measure own progress
- Develop mentoring program for states that want nothing to do with NELAC (e.g., fund paid position to help non-participating states determine where to go to get

started); need central point of contact within NELAC that is available to help shepherd states into NELAC
- Support continuing development of PBMS approach.
- Provide/Sell accreditation of AAs as a product
- Provide Recognition of PT providers
- Provide technical services (in accreditation and operation) to labs seeking accreditation or already with it.
- Continuation of development of training modules that are online (**NELAC University!**); have training that is "branded" as NELAC to provide consistency (even if it is subcontracted or provided by third parties); NELAC certified training
- Market what membership in NELAC includes (training, support, and technical assistance).

9. What characteristics should THE NEXT GENERATION have to encourage more participation? For example, more states becoming AAs or broader inclusion of other environmental programs (e.g., waste water, air, solid waste, pesticides, etc.).

- Absolute independence from EPA
- Being viewed as professional organization
- Establish NELAC as its own brand
- Broad acceptance of NELAC across all EPA programs. Focus on current positives and enhance our existing relationship with OW/DW people (since they are the only certification program that EPA currently has) to help our relationship with other EPA programs. Demonstrate to the other programs that our standards are as good as or better than existing EPA program requirements.
- Move NELAP office within EPA (out of ORD, perhaps into OW)
- Become an organization that EPA wants to interact with (independence)
- Maintain EPA involvement (EPA/states believe they have the authority to accredit labs; trade organizations want some EPA involvement in accreditation because that is what their clients expect and want.)
- Maintain use of 3rd party non-government assessors and include/add 3rd party accrediting authorities
- Use only government accreditors
- Open and accessible to all stakeholders; continue as a consensus-based body
- States (primacy labs) want to be accredited by EPA
- Assessor Pools – The composition of the assessment team should be mixed (to include multiple strengths). Do not have the same assessor or assessment team follow up on its own audit. Leverage national assessor resources: States can increase the number of parameters they accredit for through the use of a pool of national assessors with a wider degree of technical expertise than may currently be found in an individual state; this will enable a broader scope of accreditation from a single source (eliminating the current need to get multiple primacy certifications in order to cover all desired parameters since labs are currently required to start with their own state which may not be able to provide accreditation for all desired

methods/matrices/analytes). Use of a national assessor pool would help states that are not AAs.

- Goal should be a single accreditation covering all fields (technology, methods, quality) that a laboratory needs.
- Flexibility to get accreditation from any AA, not just their home state (i.e., One Stop Shopping). Provide mechanism for a lab to get primary accreditation from whoever will give them the coverage they need, not just start with home state and then piece in the rest.
- Ability for AAs to subcontract assessments to gain expertise to cover broader range of parameters. Provide the flexibility for AAs to give broader accreditation than their resources currently provide.
- Cost Effective/Business Model
- Expanded volunteer pool in NELAC that includes business professionals
- Become a legally identifiable entity
- Provision for succession planning for the next generation. – We have had the same folks participating throughout our entire 12 years of existence. There are voids created when volunteers retire and their places on committees (based on expertise and community served) are not filled.

4. What is the membership in THE NEXT GENERATION?

- Not just lab based; includes business savvy professionals
- All stakeholders including:
  - Laboratories (commercial and government),
  - State and Federal regulatory and regulated (including industry) community,
  - Lab suppliers,
  - Other environmental trade organizations, e.g. WEF, environmentalists (for example, Sierra Club),
  - Data users (engineering firms, municipalities, industry),
  - Academic community (get them on board, provide another avenue of resources),
  - Other government agencies such as USGS,
  - International community,
  - Other sovereign nations, tribal nations,
  - Young professionals – junior members,
- All stakeholders should be allowed membership as individuals or organizations

5. Other "WHAT" questions are allowed if time permits. (Note: The group considered this a wish list for the future considerations.)

- Do we need certification for field samplers and testers (stack)?
- Individual Analyst Certifications
- Standard for data validation
- Guidance on Measurement Quality Objectives
- Do we want to enter into cooperative agreements with other organizations (such as A2LA, sampling programs)?
- What is our existing status with stack sampling and analysis?

- Clarification of NELAC's accreditation role in the international community
- Develop standards to encompass all areas of environmental testing, such as stack sampling and analysis

Minutes **Self-Sufficiency Breakout Group #4**

The session was facilitated by Judy Duncan (OK DEQ) with assistance from Art Clark (USEPA).

1. **What are the strengths of the current NELAC/NELAP? What are the areas for improvement?**

Strengths:

- National standard but no national accreditation program
- Strengths could be improved
- A quality system with common terminology
- Proven track record
- Name recognition for the program
- NELAC/NELAP training and networking
- Increased status through accreditation – labs are better
- Uniform data quality – better decisions made by court and other decision makers
- Labs held to higher standards
- Costs are reduced because there are fewer audits
- Barriers to entry – fewer in NELAC/NELAP program
- One size does fit all. Implementation varies but size should be taken into account during assessments
- Advocate performance approach
- Networking to discuss standards
- EPA mandate helps marketing

Areas for Improvement:

- Structure is a weakness – dividing standards development from program implementation has created a gulf
- We are invisible to outsiders (non-NELAC) states
- We have only 20% participation
- State Buy-in not happening
  - Root cause ids EPA programs lack of participation
- "What's in it for me" not clear
- No federal regulatory driver. Federal regulations drive state programs and laboratory support
- Need proof the NELAC/NELAP program is effective
- No authority without EPA mandate
  - This is politics
  - State rules are based on EPA mandate
  - There is a model in the feds – drinking water program - required program makes it successful
  - They do it as a public health issue – other programs don't see accreditation as a public health issue
  - Money is attached
- Limited participation from private sector

- Costs for proficiency tests (used to be free but now there are commercial providers)
- 2°accreditation costs
- Cost is weakness – used to have free pts – now commercial providers
- No value in secondary accreditation – costs are high
- Fewer audits mean less oversight
- Need better communication on how standards do apply to all.
  - Quantity of scale seen as an advantage
- Lost NIST association

Summary:

Strengths

- National standard
- Single quality system
- Common terms
- Track record
- Name recognition
- Advocate for performance approach. Could be improved by rolling the approach out to other areas.
- Networking

Improvements

- Lack of buy in
- Needs improvement
- Current split has created a gulf between standard development and implementation
- Not visible to outsiders
- Don't have very good sales
- Communication on how standard does fit all
- Loss of information about standards with the split
- Loss of NIST association
- EPA does not have strong central control and we have not gotten our message out
- Been unable to sell the program to the other EPA programs – you need to have a real fish finder

2. What key services should THE NEXT GENERATION provide? For example, should it be a standards development body and if yes, what types of standards?

- Training and education
  - To labs, assessors
  - Education to potential clients (including government) data users
- EPA regulations don't define quality Information on web, standards, organize web
- Public relations = web site – clear
- Standards development
  - Remove fragmentation
- Bring everything back together
  - Should include adopting standards, oversight of program, training and education, accreditation

- Broad participation
- SDO (standards development organization) structure not working – cannot get standards to vote on
- Accredit
- Recognize AAs
- Oversight
- Buy-in and participation by private sector
- Focus on all aspects of the program not just one thing (e.g., standards development)
  - Controlled standards development
- Paid administrative support
- Document control
- Revenue generating
- Infrastructure to allow accessibility to a national database
- Run like a business with paid staff
- (Advocate) mechanism for performance based approach and standards for methods development and validation – need to promote to EPA, states
- Self governing body with oversight of AAs
- Recognize other similar entities
- Standards all states can use (+ feds) without "add ons"
  - Add ons may be more contract issues
  - We have a framework for add ons

3. What characteristics should THE NEXT GENERATION have to encourage more participation? For example, more states becoming AAs or broader inclusion of other environmental programs (e.g., waste water, air, solid waste, pesticides, etc.).

- Find alternatives to "mandates". Seek out (court) other EPA programs. (2)
- Start with office of water
- Better uniformity
- Steam line (8)
  - Quality manual template
  - Define requirements plainly (especially for small labs)
- Audits that determine data integrity and compliance (5)
- Public relations to stakeholders and legislators (What's in it for me?) (11)
- Define the market
- Strategic marketing with specific target (5)
- Add program areas (as they apply to environmental work):
  - Field measurements (5)
  - Homeland security
  - DOA type of testing
- Federal procurement initiative requiring NELAC participation by labs

4. What is the membership in THE NEXT GENERATION?

- Open
  - Sampling firms
  - Environmental labs
  - State AAs
  - Non government AAs
  - Any attendees
  - Individuals doing accreditation
  - Real estate (with environmental interests)
  - Feds

Summary for Presentation

Strengths:

- National standard (16)
- Single quality system (4)
- Unified implementation
- Data quality (4)
- Networking (5)
- Performance language approach (3)
- AAs strong
- Proficiency testing

Improvements:

- No national participation (8)
- Limited visibility
- Limited participation (5)
- What's in it for me?
- No federal mandate (11)
- Standards development/implementation gulf (2)
- Performance approach – lack of implementation
- Cost (4)

Key Services:

- Database (6)
- Training and education (9)
- Standards all states can use
- Standards development (4)
- Professional administrative support (2)
- Self governance (2)
- Advocate performance approach (2)
- AA oversight (2)
- Broad participation

Characteristics

- Public Relations Efforts to Legislators
- Streamline
  - Quality manual template
  - Define requirements plainly (for small laboratories)

- Audits for Data Integrity and Compliance
- Strategic Marketing with Specific Targets
- Field Measurements

Membership:

- All stakeholders
  - Sampling firms
  - Environmental labs
  - State AAs
  - Non-government AAs
  - Any attendees
  - Individuals doing accreditations
  - Real estate
  - Feds

Appendix 2:
Survey Form for Breakout Sessions

Break Out Discussion Questions
January 31, 2006

Purpose: To obtain input from participants for the Self-Sufficiency Task Group

"Rules":

- Everyone is encouraged to participate in the discussion session. Additionally, this questionnaire may be used to submit ideas.

During the discussion session, focus on the four core "what" questions.

- Ideas may be discussed so they are well understood, but there are no "bad" ideas.
- Other issues may be discussed as time permits

1. What are the strengths of the current NELAC/NELAP? What are the areas for improvement?

2. What key services should THE NEXT GENERATION provide? For example, should it be a standards development body and if yes, what types of standards?

3. What characteristics should THE NEXT GENERATION have to encourage more participation? For example, more states becoming AAs or broader inclusion of other environmental programs (e.g., waste water, air, solid waste, pesticides, etc.).

4. What is the membership in THE NEXT GENERATION?

5. Other "WHAT" questions are allowed if time permits.

Appendix 3:
PowerPoint Presentation Summarizing Breakout Sessions